

MFVA Elections 2010



Bishop Robert Baker was present with Fr. Kevin Bazzel to witness our 2010 Community elections- Friars in top picture are on the Chapter. Official election results- Fr. Anthony Mary- Community Servant, Fr. Miguel Marie- Vicar, Fr. Dominic Mary- Councilor, Fr. Mark Mary- Councilor, Fr. Bernard Mary- Councilor- Thank you for your prayers for our Community. Please continue to pray for holy and faithful vocations.

About the MFV.A's, "Missionarii Franciscani Verbi Aeterni"

As Franciscan Missionaries of the Eternal Word, we are a religious order of Priests and Brothers, founded by Mother Mary Angelica, P.C.P.A., in 1987, who are seeking to live an authentic renewal of consecrated life in the Franciscan tradition. Living in obedience, without anything of our own and in chastity, we share a common life of prayer before the exposed Blessed Sacrament and in Total Consecration to the Mother of God according to St. Louis Marie de Montfort. As consecrated friars, we bear new names in religion of various Saints or Blesseds as well as Our Blessed Mother's. We are dedicated to the work of evangelization - preaching and teaching the Catholic Faith so as to seek out the lost and make known to all men the love and salvation of Jesus Christ. "The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back." Ezekiel 34:16

Contact Information

For more information write to:

**Franciscan Missionaries
of the Eternal Word**

5821 Old Lantz Road
Irondale, Alabama 35290

www.FranciscanMissionaries.com



Fishers Of Men

The Newsletter of the Franciscan
Missionaries of the Eternal Word



The Joy Of Fidelity

The 2nd book of Maccabees presents to us the fierce persecution of King Antiochus against the Jewish people. During his persecution the temple was profaned and dedicated to Zeus. The Jews were not allowed to observe the Sabbath, and during the monthly celebrations in honor of the king's birthday, the Jews were forced to take part in idolatrous sacrifices and to eat ritually impure meat. And so, the 2nd book of Maccabees tells a story of a well-respected Jewish scribe named Eleazar, who was ninety years old at the time of the persecution. He refused to betray the faith of his fathers. His friends tried to get him to act deceptively, just pretending to eat impure meat so that he could be saved from execution. And yet, Eleazar resolved rather to honor God in his holy laws. It was something, he said, that was beneath the dignity of his years to act in otherwise; he did not want to give a bad example. Notice his words while being tortured. He said, "I am enduring terrible sufferings in my body under this beating, but I suffer it with joy in my soul because of my devotion to Him." The author of the book of Maccabees concludes, "Thus, in his heroic death, did he leave an example of nobility and courage not only to the young but to the whole nation." Saint John Chrysostom calls

Eleazar the proto-martyr of the Old Testament. His serene composure and even joy in the face of martyrdom is a foretaste of the joy in persecution that Jesus promised to His disciples. It is a joy that the Lord grants to those who persevere in the faith and in their vocations despite every kind of difficulty.

I've never forgotten a conference given by a religious sister at St. Charles Seminary when I was a seminarian there. She talked about the joy of fidelity - that there is a joy that accompanies fidelity that



St. Thomas More

is not enjoyed by those who are not faithful. *The joy of fidelity.* That is something Eleazar experienced even in his terrible physical sufferings - there was a joy in his soul. The First Christians, in fact, had the custom of speaking of their fellow Christians as 'the faithful.' This terminology came into use during times of persecution, slander, coercion and difficulties. Those who persevered were called 'the faithful'. *The faithful.* Are you a member of the faithful? Are you striving to remain a member of the faithful? The Book of Revelation says this: "Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life." *Be faithful unto death.* This is the challenge for all of us: to be faithful unto death. Ninety-year-old Eleazar realized he didn't have much time left, so he would not stop being faithful now. But, do we really have that much more time?

As I was crossing the piazza in Hanceville, a couple came up to me and said, "Would you bless us? We're newlyweds." I looked twice, and they said, "We've been married thirty-seven years." I said that in comparison with eternity, you are newlyweds, and so I gave them a blessing for newlyweds. When we think about Eleazar saying: "Here I am at ninety years old - I'm not going to stop being faithful now." But,

Continued on page 2 ...

The Joy of Fidelity Continued ...

do we really have that much more time? And what are the obstacles to being faithful? One of the obstacles is pride. When we encounter troubles, obstacles, hardships, disappointments – it's: *I don't deserve this* and there's a temptation to be unfaithful. Another obstacle is fear: we don't trust the Lord. We don't trust that He will give us the grace to sustain us and, in fact, will turn difficulties and pain into something good, into holiness, into union with Himself, into that joy of fidelity. Another obstacle to fidelity is lukewarmness which robs us of joy in following Christ, because we live halfheartedly. The sight of those who have persevered in their faith and vocation, thanks to our good example, is one of the great joys the Lord will give us in Heaven.

An English author said of Saint Thomas More that he was the person of greatest virtue this island ever produced. Saint Thomas was told to do something similar to Eleazar: "Just take the oath. Don't mean it in your heart." He couldn't do it. The playwright, Robert Boldt, who wrote the play *A Man For All Seasons* asked himself, as the playwright, "Why do I take for my hero a man who brings about his own death because he can't put his hand on an old black book and tell an ordinary lie?"

There was in the news some time ago a very famous baseball player's perjury. Why couldn't Thomas just do that? Put his hand on some old black book, the Bible, and just tell an ordinary lie to save his own skin? Donald DeMarco writes, "His answer, essentially, is that the virtue that More lives and dies by is his loyalty to his primary commitment." Yes, we must be loyal to God. We must be loyal to our family. We must be loyal to our community. We must be loyal to our friends, to spouses. But there is a hierarchy and the lesser loyalties are not loyalty at all if we're not loyal to the higher: if we're not being loyal to God. And so, More lived and died by his loyalty to his primary commitment. King Henry VIII required More to swear loyalty to him, but More knew this meant swearing disloyalty to God and to Rome. Further, Henry wanted More to swear his disloyalty in the presence of God because he was to take an oath. An oath is to call God as a witness. Why is it that in the courtroom today people have no awareness of this – that in taking the oath one is calling God to be present as witness and as judge? Disloyal Henry who was disloyal both to God and to the Church, wanted loyalty to himself. He had the political power to coerce

many, but not all - not Thomas. Henry had the political power to coerce many, but he had no peace. Thomas went to his death with grace, a tranquil conscience and joy.

And Donald DeMarco comments further, that More's refusal testified that "he has a *self*, an inner reality that cannot be denied or swept aside by fears or inducements. He proves he is a self because he stands by his word." The vacillating, backtracking individual who switches loyalties whenever it's convenient does not reveal the presence of a self. Such a person, DeMarco says, seems to be indistinguishable from the exterior forces that mold him. Are you distinguishable from the hedonistic culture we live in? If you are, then you have a self. If you hold to something greater than yourself, you are revealing that you're not just indistinguishable from all the rest, from the forces that mold people, that there is an individuality there. There is a part of us that we refuse to let go of. More could not be loyal to his king if it required that he not be loyal to himself.

The playwright Boldt has More say this: "I neither could nor would rule the king but there's a little, a little area where I must rule myself. It's very little, less to him than a tennis court, but we must preserve it." When his daughter said to him to just take the oath and not to mean it in his heart, he said, "You hold yourself in your hands. It's like water that you cup in your hands and if you do such a thing, it's like you open your fingers and you lose yourself."

So it is for us all to strive always to be faithful, to be loyal, first of all to God, and then to our communities, to our families, to our spouses, to our friends. May it be said of us, as it was said of Eleazar: "This is how he died, leaving in his death a model of courage and an unforgettable example of virtue, not only for the young but for the whole nation."

Fr. Joseph Mary, MFVA

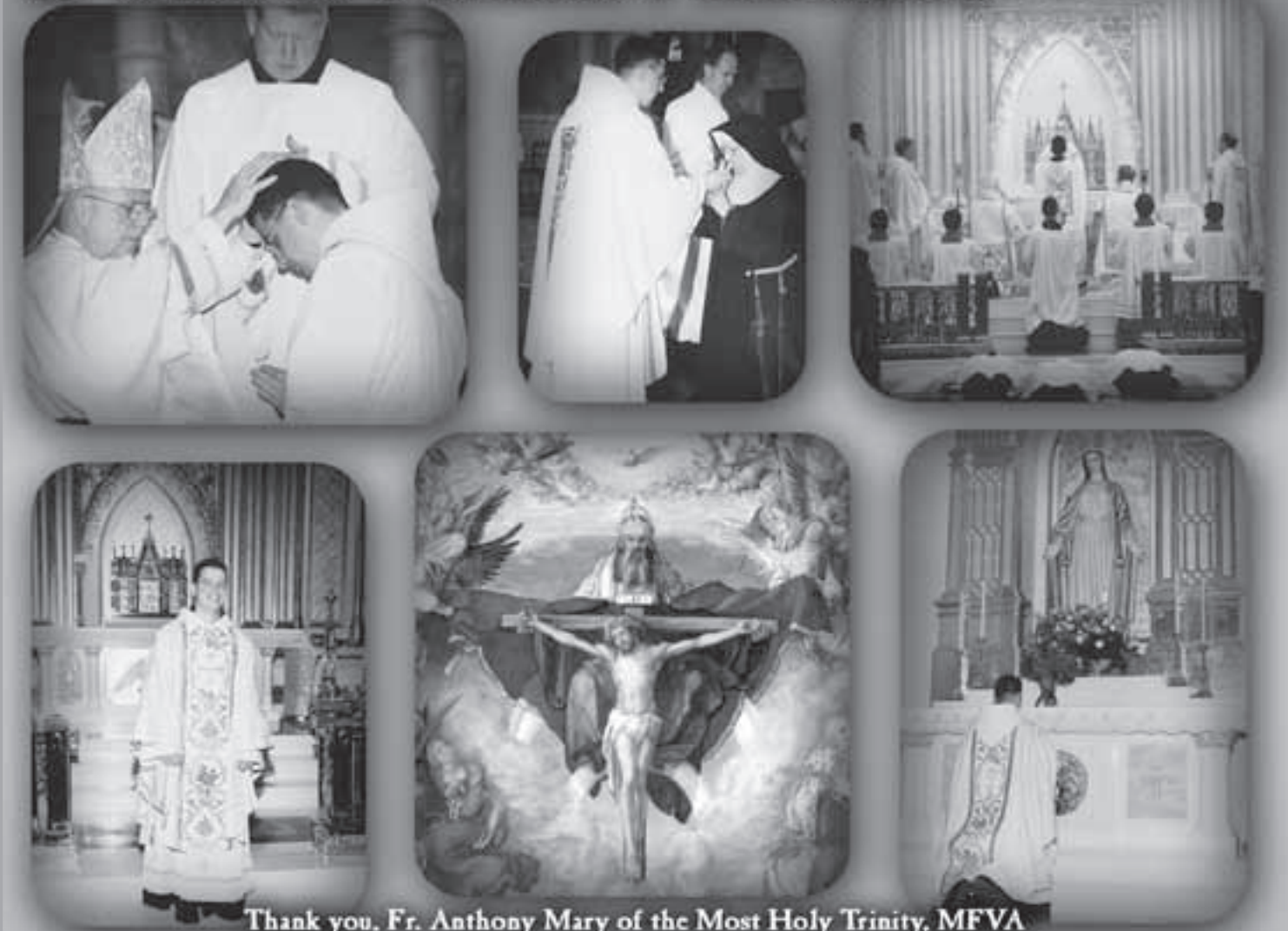


Quester's Corner

Donations to our community can be sent via check (made payable to the Franciscan Missionaries) or online at www.FranciscanMissionaries.com

May it please Thee O Lord to reward with eternal life, all those who do good to us for the sake of Thy Holy Name

10 Years of Faithful Priesthood



Thank you, Fr. Anthony Mary of the Most Holy Trinity, MFVA



Top left- On June 3, 2000, Bishop David E. Foley ordaining Fr. Anthony to the priesthood Top middle- Mother Angelica receiving Holy Communion from Fr. Anthony Top right and bottom left- Fr. Anthony's first Holy Mass Middle right- Fr. Anthony consecrating his priesthood to the Blessed Virgin Mary Bottom right- Fr. Anthony with his family after his first Mass